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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3848

INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0329

RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 0183

RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO PRIORITY 0688

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY PRIORITY

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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 001344

SIPDIS

ENERGY FOR LEINSTEIN, HQ SOUTHCOTM ALSO FOR POLAD, TREASURY
FOR MKACZMAREK, COMMERCE FOR 4332/MAC/WH/JLAO, NSC FOR
DRESTREPO AND LROSELLO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/2019

TAGS: ECON ENRG EPET KNNP PREL RU VE

SUBJECT: RUSSIA HAS NO PLANS TO BUILD NUCLEAR REACTORS IN
VENEZUELA

REF: A. (A) CARACAS 1296

1B. 1236

1C. 853

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Classified By: Ambassador Patrick Duddy for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: During an October 15 initial courtesy call with Ambassador Duddy, Russian Ambassador Zaemsky denied reports that Russia would help Venezuela build nuclear reactors, saying that its nuclear cooperation with Venezuela was limited to the medical field and food controls. With respect to recent arms purchases, Zaemsky said that there were controls with respect to the transfer of weapons to third countries and that Russia will meet its international obligations to report on sales. He also stated that Gazprom's exploration in Venezuela has not resulted in the discovery of commercially viable quantities of gas in the areas assigned to them. End Summary.

NO NUCLEAR PLANTS

12. (C) Ambassador Zaemsky stated that reports of Russia helping Venezuela to build nuclear reactors were untrue. However, he did say that the Russians will be cooperating with Venezuela to use nuclear energy in the medical field and in the area of food controls (Reftel A). In a separate meeting on October 16, the Russian DCM reiterated that Russian-Venezuelan nuclear cooperation will be transparent and consistent with international safeguards and was only in the areas mentioned by the Ambassador.

TRANSPARENCY IN ARMS SALES TO VENEZUELA

13. (C) According to Ambassador Zaemsky, Russia has been clear with Venezuela about the need for transparency in the purchases Venezuela is making of portable weapons systems from Russia. He stated that controls exist in these transactions but did not elaborate on the type of controls being enforced. Further, he said that Russia has informed

Venezuela that the GOR will be diligent in meeting the reporting requirements of its international treaties.

FEW RESULTS IN GAS EXPLORATION

14. (C) Responding to an inquiry about Gazprom's involvement in the development of the gas industry in Venezuela, Ambassador Zaemsky indicated that the areas that have been designated for Russia to explore have not yet yielded commercially viable reserves that would warrant significant Russian investment (Reftels B & C). If this happens eventually, however, he indicated that the gas would likely be sold within the Western Hemisphere.

BUREAUCRACY WOES FOR THE RUSSIANS, TOO

15. (C) Despite the warm bilateral relationship, Russian companies have had some trouble navigating the Venezuelan bureaucracy. Ambassador Zaemsky related that he recently had to make phone calls to the Venezuelan government to help a Russian company.

VENEZUELA: NOT WHAT HE EXPECTED

16. (C) Ambassador Zaemsky, who served previously in Venezuela in the 1970s, spoke about three specific new elements of Venezuelan life that he has found surprising. First, he said he was struck by the polarization of Venezuelan society.

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Second, he was surprised by the degree to which the Venezuelan opposition was divided. Third, he questioned whether Venezuela has any political-economic vision for the future.

RUSSIAN TOURISTS PREFER THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

17. (C) Ambassador Zaemsky, who is also accredited as Ambassador to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, noted the great increase in Russian tourist travel to the Dominican Republic, saying that it now exceeds Cuba as a Caribbean destination for Russian tourist groups.

BIO NOTES

18. (C) Ambassador Zaemsky graduated from the State Institute of International Relations in 1974 and from the State Service Academy in 2000. He began his diplomatic career in 1974 when he was 22 years old. He has served at various Russian missions in the Western Hemisphere, including Costa Rica, Venezuela (previously), Mexico, the United States, and the United Nations. He was appointed Ambassador to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in June 2009. In addition, Ambassador Zaemsky has served as the Vice-Director of the Russian Federation's Department of Foreign Relations for North America from 2004-04. Since 2004, he has served as the Vice-Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department of International Organizations. He speaks Spanish fluently, speaks English (but prefers Spanish), is married, and has two daughters.

DUDDY